

3. Oral Questions

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Sorry, before we start Oral Questions, Members will be aware that the Minister for Economic Development is out of the Island and his Assistant Ministers are not present either. Under 27(2) of the States of Jersey Law therefore, I would like to designate a Minister for Treasury and Resources and thereby ask him to answer question 2, which Deputy Le Hérissier has tabled under Oral Questions this morning.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right. That is the only question, Chief Minister, is it, of the Minister for Economic Development?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As far as I am aware, Sir, yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Right, we come to question time and the first question Deputy Baudains will ask of the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

[9:45]

3.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the progress of the Fort Regent Political Steering Group:

Further to the publication of the Fort Regent Political Steering Group Interim Report R.134/2011, when will the group report its findings, and will a development plan be presented to the States for debate?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

Sir, can I ask my Assistant Minister to be rapporteur for the question?

Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

The Steering Group met on 30th November 2012 and agreed that the strategic review of the Fort was the preferred way forward. The Steering Group has instructed officers, with the assistance of the States of Jersey Development Company, to develop an appropriate project plan to engage with the market in conjunction with Education, Sports and Culture Sport Strategy Consultancy Paper that was issued last week. This piece of work is nearing completion and will be considered by the Steering Group at its next meeting, scheduled for 18th March this month. Progress has been made with regard to the number of standalone projects and opportunities at the Fort, and I have previously circulated to Members an update based on the previous Steering Group report R.134/2011. The Fort forms the largest part of the Mont de la Ville regeneration zone, which will be subject to Supplementary Planning Guidance to be developed and issued by the Minister for Planning and Environment. It will be a matter for this Minister as to whether the resulting plan will be brought to this Assembly for debate.

3.1.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I wonder if the Assistant Minister could advise why the progress has been so slow and whether it has anything to do with the funding issues for the site?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

To take the second part of that question first, no it has not been related to funding. Fort Regent is a difficult nut to crack. We have failed to address these situations in previous Assemblies and to be honest I am a bit disappointed myself at the lack of progress over the last 12 months. It has

come to light that it is probably down to the fact that the way we try and do this across a large range of departments, and it is no one particular officer's role to address the Fort Regent issues. That is something that is changing in the next 3 months and we will have a dedicated officer whose role will be to drive forward the development of the Fort and to provide a long-term sustainable solution.

3.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Will the Assistant Minister first of all remind us which other States Members are now on the Steering Group?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The Steering Group consists of myself, 2 Members from Education, Sport and Culture, as the political representation.

3.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

A supplementary: was the Steering Group consulted by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services or the department before plans were unveiled recently for Snow Hill car park and how that might impact on possible access to Fort Regent from Snow Hill, which has been discussed in the past?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I can confirm that I was present at the working group that looked into the possibility of extensions to car parking at Snow Hill, along with other politicians that attended that workshop.

3.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

Was that in his capacity though as the Steering Group, or did he attend in a different capacity from Property Holdings?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

That was in my capacity as ... having delegated responsibility for Property Holdings, and thus Fort Regent.

3.1.5 Senator L.J. Farnham:

I wonder if the Assistant Minister would agree that the neglect of Fort Regent over the years is nothing short of a disgrace and especially now, given the straightened economic times we are in, it would be a very good idea to expedite the regeneration proposals; and will he therefore undertake to move this right up the list of his priorities so something can be done with the Fort very soon?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

That is exactly why I have instructed officers to rearrange Internal Affairs, to make sure we have a dedicated individual responsible for delivering some solutions for Fort Regent.